

USU Libraries Instruction Program Annual Report for 2004-2005

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I. Introduction

The USU Library Instruction program taught a record number of instruction sessions (663) during the 2004-2005 academic year. Much of this increase was a result of the new curriculum in English 1010, which was designed to include four library lessons. Librarians continued to teach sessions for a wide range of courses across the university, from the freshman orientation program, Connections, to upper division courses and graduate seminars. Librarians also engaged in a wide range of teaching, assessment, and professional development activities.

II. English Composition Curriculum

The most significant project for the year was implementing the English 1010 and 2010 curriculum that we developed in the spring and summer of 2004. This entailed teaching four lessons with the English 1010 classes and experimenting with our menu of options for English 2010 classes. The English 1010 curriculum included tours of the library related to the theme of education and a class assignment on the topic. We conducted more than 80 tours in a week and half, with assistance from Special Collections and several members of technical services departments. Students and instructors were positive about these interactive tours, with many students especially appreciative of being able to gain an understanding of the physical layout of the library.

There were some scheduling difficulties with the English 1010 courses, but the curriculum was generally well-received by students and instructors, with informal assessments showing that

students felt more confident in the library and were more willing to ask librarians for help. We reached more English 1010 courses than we had in the past (198). The number of English 2010 sessions dropped slightly. Much of the emphasis on the Fall was on English 1010, which might explain this drop in 2010 classes. Improving our curriculum and getting greater buy-in from 2010 instructors is a primary goal for the 2005-2006 year. The most positive outcome of the new curriculum was that many English 1010 and 2010 instructors saw the need

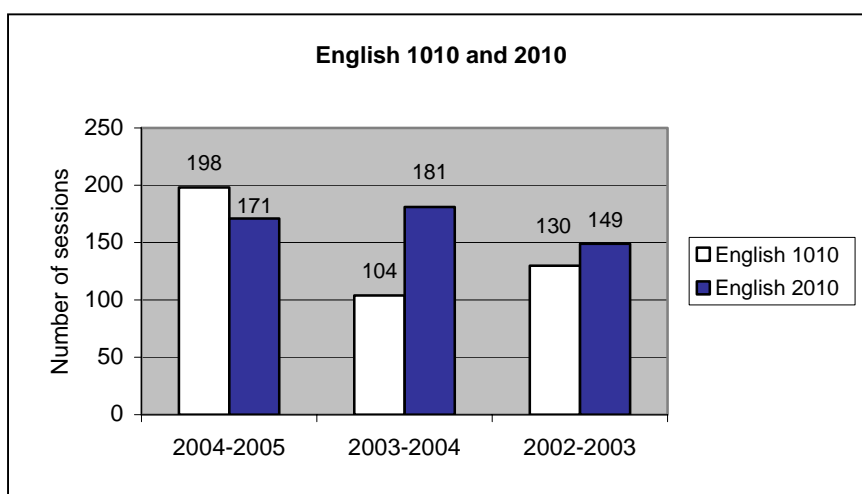


Figure 1

for even greater integration of the library and English curriculum, a project for the 2005-2006 academic year. While not every lesson worked as planned, the curriculum design process opened a dialogue about how to better teach students what they need to know to succeed in the English composition courses.

In addition to the new curriculum in the regular English 1010 and 2010 courses, Flora Shrode, Steve Harrison, and Wendy Holliday developed a problem-based assignment and learning activity for the Honors section of English 2010. The success of this assignment has led to discussions about further integrating library instruction throughout the Honors curriculum. It also led to discussions with the regular English 1010 and 2010 faculty about using problem-based learning in these classes.

III. Value-Added Assessment for English 1010 and 2010

We partnered with the English Writing Program to conduct a value-added assessment of changes in student learning and behavior between the time students enter English 1010 and complete English 2010. All English 1010 students wrote a prompted essay at the beginning of the semester and all English 2010 students wrote the same essay at the end of the term. Scores were compared. For the library portion, approximately 1,200 students took the SAILS exam. The preliminary SAILS results suggest that there is no significant difference between the performance of students entering 1010 and students completing 2010. All USU students performed at the national average. The SAILS test is an experimental pilot program, so this could be a reflection of the test itself. We are currently doing more detailed data analysis to see if the results hold across more precise demographic groups (e.g. freshmen versus sophomores in English 1010). The results could also suggest that students entering USU have already mastered the skills tested using the SAILS instrument, which is a multiple choice test.

In order to complement the SAILS test results, which does not measure how students actually conduct research and use information, we also completed a citation analysis of the essays written for the English composition portion of the assessment. The citation analysis suggests some improvement in 2010 students citing outside sources of information. Only 16% of English 1010 students cited outside source versus 45% of all 2010 students. Even so, 70% of all English 1010 and 2010 students failed to cite any outside sources of information. The instructions for the essay did not require outside sources, because the assessment was designed to see if students would do this on their own. If required, these numbers might change. Nevertheless, the assessment likely captured some of the natural habits or tendencies of students at USU. Furthermore, the students who did use outside sources of information relied heavily on the Web. 54.5% of all sources cited were web sites. The most surprising finding was that there were several web sites that were repeatedly cited by different students. Re-creating Google searches on likely search terms for the essay topic (free speech on campus) showed that most of these repeated web sites were on the first page of Google results, suggesting that students did fairly superficial searches and stopped at the first information they found.

The English Department was pleased with the citation analysis results because it confirmed suspicions that students have a tendency to stop too early in the search process, using the most convenient sources they can find. The SAILS test results also suggest that librarians and English

instructors might need to spend less time on search mechanics, and more on critical thinking skills and research as a process of inquiry. The assessment further supported the emphasis on greater integration between library instruction and the English composition curriculum. The project deepened our already strong relationship with the Writing Program at USU.

IV. Connections 2004

The Instruction Program developed and delivered a new Connections library lesson, introducing students to the wide range of information sources available in the library. We selected materials for 11 stations representing different themes related to the Connections writing assignment on the transition to college. Students visited one of these stations and selected an information source. They completed a worksheet, answering questions about the nature of the source and recording a bibliographic citation in either MLA or APA format. Librarians informally roved around the stations and provided one-on-one assistance. Librarians then led a wrap-up session, in which they described the library collections and answered questions. This curriculum involved many hours of preparation on the part of librarians who selected thematic materials for the lesson. We taught 17 sessions, which included 34 Connections classes and 850 students total.

An examination of student worksheets suggested that students were able to grasp the main points of the exercise and identify different types of information sources. Institutional changes in the Connections program for 2005, however, will not allow for such a long session with students and we are currently designing a shorter introduction to the library.

V. Web Site Design and Online Utilities

We created a new instruction web site, which includes links to teacher and student resources for English composition and discipline-specific courses. The new web site, along with an upswing in instruction activity more generally, seemed to result in increased web site traffic. A total of 4,414 users visited the Instruction home page during the academic year. Figure 2 shows the monthly pattern, as well as a heavy increase in traffic in the Spring semester.

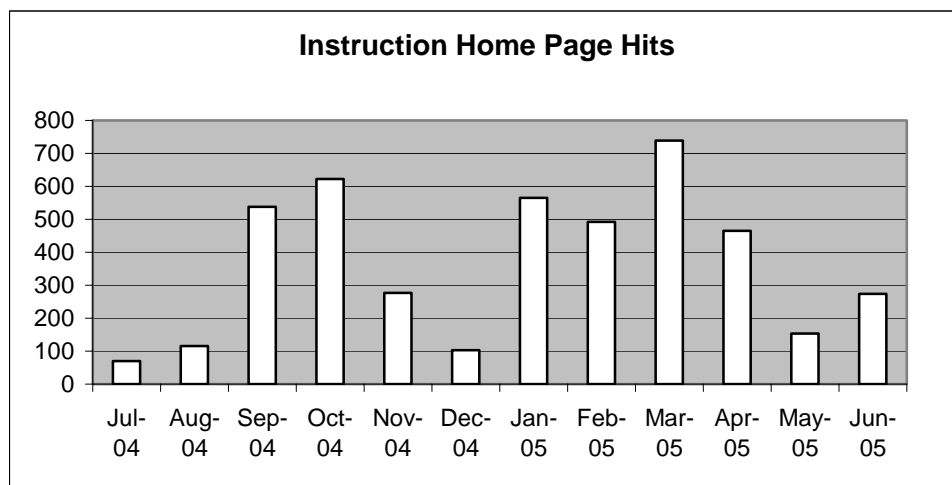


Figure 2

The most popular page on the Instruction web site was the Finding Articles tutorial in the Library Research Guide, with a total of 2,072 visitors. The Organize My Research Tutorial was also visited by 1,031 users. Several librarians, using a new template designed by Britt Fagerheim, created course web pages, so that students could refer to lists of recommended resources after the instruction sessions. Several students, in their evaluation and assessment surveys, singled out these course web pages as one of the most useful parts of the instruction sessions. See Table 1 for a list of the most frequently visited course web pages. We also created an assessment page, with links to our electronic assessment tools, now hosted in Survey Monkey. We also instituted a new online scheduler, which has eased problems with classroom bookings and spreadsheet management.

Course Web Page	Hits
BIS 2550	1,615
ITE 3440	1,218
BA 4590	563
JCOM 4000	420

Table 1

VI. Information Literacy Fellows

In April, Flora Shrode and Wendy Holliday developed a proposal for a pilot Information Literacy Fellow Program. The program is designed to get USU faculty members to collaborate with librarians on developing joint learning outcomes and activities that can be better integrated into the curriculum. John Elweiler agreed to fund the pilot program. Given our strong relationship with the English Writing Program and the need to re-design our English composition curriculum over the summer, we decided to focus on English 1010 and 2010 instructors for the pilot year. 16 instructors applied in a competitive application process. We selected five fellows (Julie Johns, Heather Robison, Anne Stark, Michael Ward, and Maria Walters), all with a wide range of experience teaching English 1010 and 2010. We conducted some basic training in learning theory and information literacy (see below) and broke into working groups. Currently, we are developing new learning activities for the English composition courses.

VII. Professional Development

The Instruction Program held its first retreat in August 2004. We learned about organizational culture, risk-taking and innovation, and discussed ideas for further professional development and program goals. We held a spring debriefing session, in which we discussed successes and problems with our past year of teaching, setting an agenda for future professional development and programmatic needs. We also held book discussions of Parker Palmer's, *The Courage to Teach* and a training session on leading class discussions. As part of the pilot Information Literacy Fellows Program, we held a 4-hour training session, including a discussion of learning theory, facilitated by Jim Rogers of the Intensive English Language Institute and Department of Instructional Technology. The second part of the training was dedicated to discussing the relationship between information literacy and writing instruction. These sessions were well-received by librarians and the Information Literacy Fellows and were used as a springboard for collaboration over the summer.

Several librarians attended training workshops and other professional development activities at library conferences throughout the year. Rob Morrison attended an ACRL pre-conference workshop on assessment. Deleyne Wentz was selected to attend the ACRL's Institute for

Information Literacy Immersion program, and she returned with several ideas about how to improve our instruction and help us develop as teaching librarians.

VIII. Classroom Design

Given the move to the new building, we explored the issue of effective classroom design over the course of the year. Teaching librarians brainstormed what kinds of teaching and learning we wanted to occur in the new classrooms. Group activities, active learning, and peer teaching were three prominent themes that emerged from these discussions. We worked with Jordy Guth, of USU's Facilities Department, to design the large classroom as more flexible learning space, with movable pods of furniture, space for computer- and non-computer based activities, and a portable lectern to facilitate student presentations.

IX. Assessment

The Instruction Program began experimenting with different ways to assess student learning. In addition to the special Value-Added Assessment discussed above, we shifted our emphasis from the evaluation of teaching to the assessment of student learning. We created several short "one-minute paper" assessments that can be used at the end of sessions to see what students learn and remember from a one-shot instruction session. Librarians used these to evaluate their lesson plans and teaching strategies and provide feedback to students on concepts that remained muddy.

We also conducted several more in-depth assessments at the end of several classes to determine whether instruction affected student behavior in terms of their research patterns, their willingness to get help from a librarian, and whether they identified learning any new concepts or skills. Two English 2010 classes (including one of the Honors 2010 sections) and two BA 4590 classes were administered the Comprehensive Session Evaluation in electronic form (see Appendix A for the survey instrument). We received 22 responses total (9 for the English 2010, mainly the Honors section) and 13 for the BA classes. The response rate was low for these electronic surveys. A few librarians used the same survey in print form, and these results confirmed the electronic surveys.

From the electronic surveys for the English 2010 classes, nearly 78% of students said they learned something new. The most helpful portions of class included the discussion of how to access and search the databases, especially the subject specific databases that applied to their projects or majors. When asked what instruction would have helped them on their assignments, several students commented that they wanted more one-on-one time with a librarian and step-by-step instructions of how to locate a physical copy of an article in the library. Interestingly, despite positive reviews of the sessions, only 22% of students sought the help of the librarian after class, suggesting that we need to encourage students to set up more appointments or one-on-one consultations with the librarians, since this seemed to be a desired format of instruction for many students.

The paper surveys confirmed many of these findings. In results from two English 1010 classes, students found the library tours and hands-on searching most helpful. According to one student, "the tour helped me understand the great resources we have." When asked how to improve the

library instruction session, students replied that having instruction on how to search library resources right after the tour would be the most helpful. They also wanted more help documenting sources. For these classes, students were also positive about knowing where to get help. One student said, "After, it was a lot easier to ask the librarian for help."

Comprehensive Session Evaluations, in print form, were also completed by four more English 2010 classes. Students said that they did learn something, including how to take advantage of library resources. Tours received positive reviews, as did a concept mapping lesson designed to help students focus their topics and develop research questions. These students also wanted help with narrowing topics, more hands-on practice and more extensive tours of the library.

We found similar results for the BA 4590 class. Nearly 85% of students said that they learned something new in the class. Most of the students identified the business-specific databases and reference books as new to them and as the most helpful part of the instruction sessions. This class was more successful in encouraging consultations with librarians. 53.8% of students consulted a librarian for help after the session. Students wanted more one-on-one time, noting that the librarians covered a lot of material quickly. Students also wanted more help in narrowing searches.

Finally, we talked to three English 1010 and 2010 students in informal learning circles, conducted in the Spring. These sessions were designed to get students to describe their experiences in class and to reflect on what they did or did not learn. One English 1010 student was quite positive about the library sessions, noting that he actually used some library materials for his assignments, rather than just surfing the Web. He also said he felt more comfortable and confident in the library, which was a major goal of the English 1010 curriculum. He felt that he needed a refresher, however, at the end of the semester as he was working on his final paper assignment. The 2010 students confirmed many of the impressions from the Comprehensive Session Evaluation surveys. They learned more about the specific resources available in the library, but they wanted more instruction on how to narrow and refine their searches. One student suggested a follow-up session so that students could do a little research and then read and reflect on what they found. The follow-up session could help clarify their research plan.

We also surveyed a small number of faculty members in English 1010, English 2010 and PSYC 1730 to see whether library instruction met their expectations and contributed to student learning (See Appendix B for the survey instrument). Of the 16 instructors surveyed, all of them said that student work met their expectations in terms of quality. 87.5% of them said that students seemed more confident in conducting research. All of the instructors agreed or strongly agreed that the library instruction sessions supported the learning goals of the class, integrated active learning techniques, and were appropriate to student assignments. 92.3% of respondents said that the students were positive about the sessions. (See Tables 2-5)

Did the quality of the students' library-related work products meet your expectations? (n=16)	
Yes	16
No	0

Table 2

Did the students appear to feel more confident doing research? (n=16)	
Yes	14
No	2

Table 3

The students' reaction to the instruction session was positive (n=13)	
Strongly agree	7
Agree	5
Neutral	1

Table 4

The library session(s) met the learning goals of my class. (n=13)	
Strongly agree	8
Agree	5

Table 5

In their comments, especially for the English 1010 classes, instructors noted that students used higher quality and more relevant sources in their assignments. One instructor noted that they even used more creative sources, rather than just newspapers articles and books.

From these various assessments, we get a fairly good picture of what students learned in both the English 1010 and 2010 classes, as well as an upper division business class. Students learned more about the library resources available to them, ranging from specific business databases to reference books. Tours were an especially effective means of introducing students to the library. Many students and instructors also noted that they used library resources, rather than the Web only, in their final papers. Students also felt more comfortable asking for help, although some surveys suggest that many students still did not do so, even if they encountered difficulties in the library.

All of the assessments suggest areas for improvement as well. Several students commented that they wanted help narrowing their searches and that they wanted more one-on-one time with a librarian, working on their specific topics. Given these assessments, the following recommendations will be the focus of curriculum revision and professional development for the 2005-2006 academic year:

- Continue to offer tours as part of both the English 1010 and 2010 curriculum. For subject specific classes, perhaps begin to include a shortened tour, showing students where collections in their discipline can be found physically in the library.
- Continue to highlight what is available in the library, including reference sources, Special Collections, and other unusual material.
- Continue to highlight ways to get help from a librarian.
- Develop an instructional lesson, exercise, or tutorial that helps students focus their topics and refine their search results.
- Develop an instructional session for follow-up in the middle of the research process. Use this time to have students reflect on what they have learned from some preliminary research, develop new research questions, and offer coaching or guidance on how to search for information to answer those questions.

- Discuss with the English instructors and other faculty members ways in which we can cover the material and offer one-on-one assistance on research projects.

The USU Library Instruction Program has just begun the process of assessing student learning. We experimented with different types of assessments this year and will expand on these in 2005-2006. Wendy Holliday, Britt Fagerheim, and Rob Morrison are currently working on a formal assessment plan. This will incorporate lessons learned from the assessment process this year, including:

- Develop a regular schedule for assessment. It was easy to assess classes that went well. We hope to assess a more random set of classes in the coming year (e.g. every 5th English 1010 class).
- Develop a format for compiling and reporting results of one-minute assessments. During the past year, everyone compiled results differently. A standard format will help synthesize what we learn through assessment. It will also help librarians reflect on other assessment opportunities, such as class discussions, worksheets, and short assignments, in order to record how a session went and make recommendations for changes in the future.
- Work with instructors more closely so that librarians can provide feedback to students, an important part of the assessment process.

X. Statistics

Statistics do not tell the whole story of the past year's instructional activities, but they do provide evidence of increased activity and the widening reach of the USU Library Instruction Program. We taught 663 classes, 100 more than we did last year, mainly because of an increase in English 1010 classes. The total number of classes includes 10 distance education classes. For more information on these classes, see the DELS Annual Report

(<http://library.usu.edu/Distedli/annrep05.htm>).

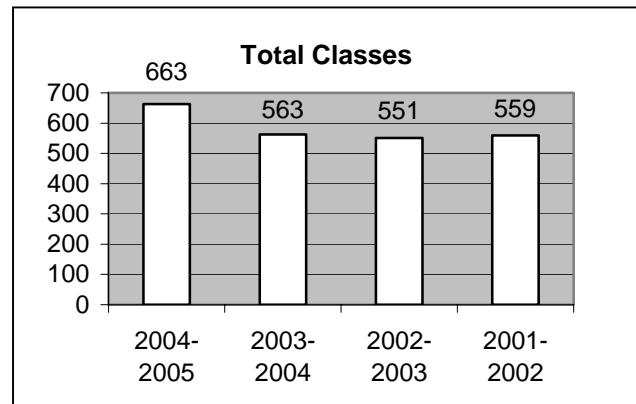


Figure 3

A. Students

We also reached a substantial number of students (9,079). We began to keep track of individual student visits and repeat visits. The total number of student hours was calculated by counting the number of individual students who attended each session. The total number of students reached was calculated by subtracting the number of students who attended repeated library sessions for a single course. There might, of course, be some additional duplication for students who attended a library session for more than one course (e.g. English 2010 and BIS 2550). But we think these numbers better estimate the reach of our program in terms of the student population.

Our total student visits (including repeat visits) of 13,554 was another record for the program. These were primarily undergraduate students (88%) and reflect an emphasis on the English writing courses. It also includes 258 distance education students. See Figures 4 and 5.

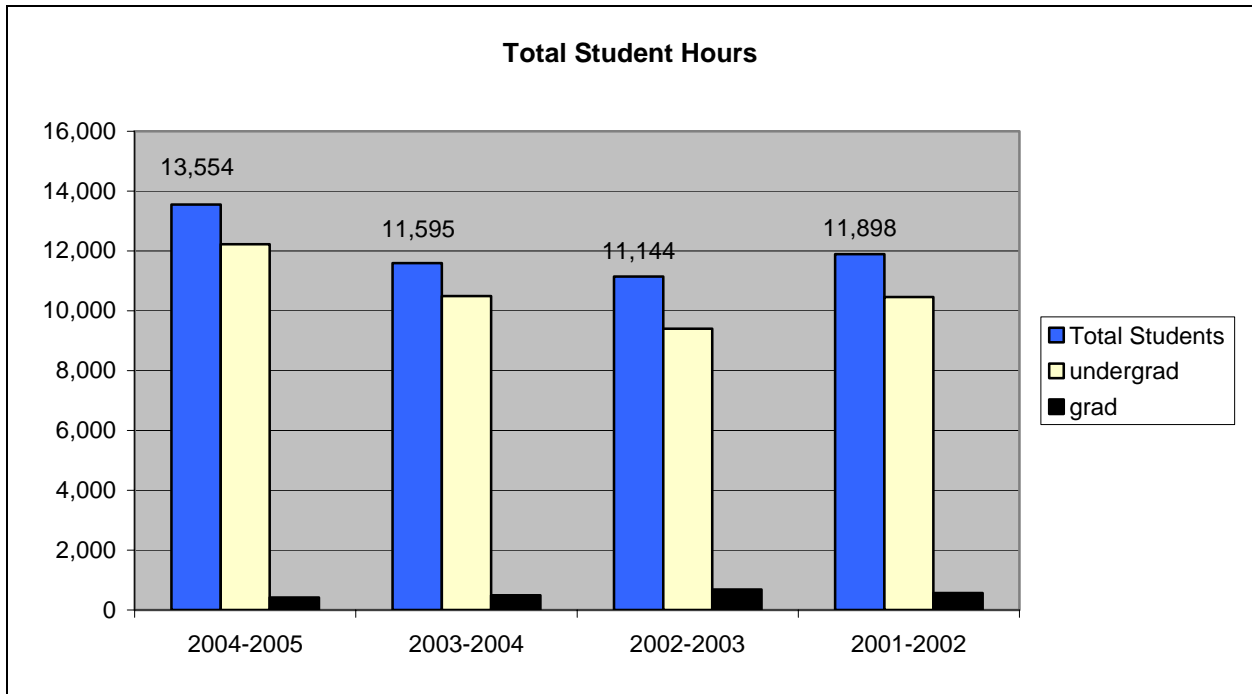


Figure 4

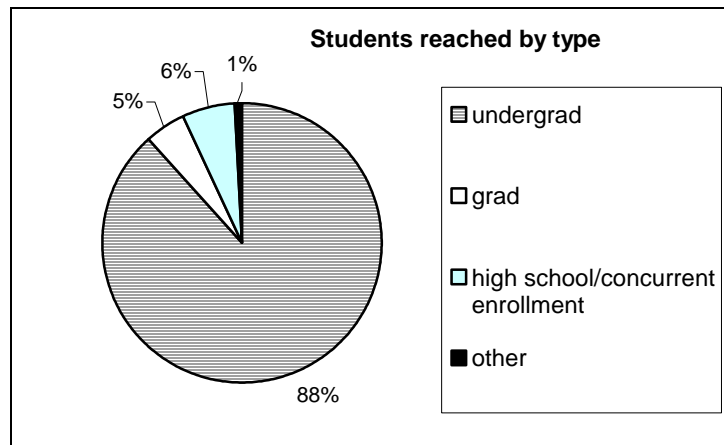


Figure 5

While our main focus has always been on undergraduate education, graduate students need information literacy instruction as well. Unfortunately, there has been a steady decline in the number of graduate students in our sessions. In 2002-2003, 680 graduated students attended instruction sessions. In the last year, only 419 students did. Increased outreach to graduate students will be a goal for coming year.

We also reached a considerable number of high school students (569), generally enrolled in English 1010 through concurrent enrollment (see Table 6 for a list of high school classes).

Bear River H.S.	2
Box Elder H.S.	4
Logan H. S.	6
Mt Crest H.S.	5
Preston H.S.	2
SkyView H.S.	9
Total	28

Table 6: High school classes

B. Courses

English 1010 and 2010 classes accounted for the majority (57%) of all library instruction sessions. Several of the English classes were repeat sessions, in which the instructor scheduled more than one library session for a class. There were 123 repeat sessions in English 1010 and 83 for English 2010. The remaining breakdown of classes includes a large number of subject-specific classes, several PSYC 1730 classes (college skills designed for at-risk students), Connections, and other workshops. See Table 7.

	English 1010	English 2010	PSYC 1730	Connections	Subject	Other
2004-2005	198	171	37	34	188	14
2003-2004	104	181	n/a	33	191	30
2002-2003	130	149	n/a	40	158	30

Table 7: Sessions by type

Librarians taught sessions for every college and 34 of 47 departments on campus. The College of Business participated in the instruction program most heavily, with 60 classes. This reflects ongoing work with two large classes (MHR 2990 and BIS 2550) that bring several sections to the library each year. HASS and the College of Education followed closely behind in terms of the number of classes. Note that English 1010 and 2010 and PSYC 1730 are counted separately as more general classes. Some of the class totals are influenced by the sheer size of the college and the number courses offered. Still, outreach efforts to underserved programs in the College of Science, Natural Resources, and Agriculture will be a goal for the coming year. See Table 8 for a complete total of classes by college.

Colleges	#
Agriculture	9
Business	60
Education	42
Engineering	13
HASS	53
Natural Resources	2
Science	9
	188

Table 8: Classes by college

BIS and MHR, because of the classes mentioned above, were the heaviest departmental participants in the instruction program. FCHD, JCOM, LAEP, and English also brought several classes to the library for sessions. The top ten departments are listed in Table 9. In 2005-2006,

we will also work on identifying classes in the following departments which scheduled no classes during the past year: Art; Aquatic Watershed and Earth Resources; Biology; Electrical and Computer Engineering; Economics; Forest, Range, and Wildlife Sciences; Geology, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering; Math; Music; Nutrition and Food Science; Nursing; Physics; and Theater.

Departments	Total
BIS	29
MHR	19
FCHD	14
JCOM	11
English (except 1010 and 2010)	10
LAEP	10
PSY (not 1730)	9
BA	8
HIST	8
ITE/ETE	6

Table 9: Classes by department

A variety of content was included in library instruction sessions. Many still focused on how to use specific library tools, such as the online catalog and article databases. Others included instruction in searching the free Web, using reference books for a specific topic, or more general critical thinking and writing skills, such as concept mapping, developing a research strategy, and evaluating information. The more than 100 sessions in the “other” category suggests that librarians are moving beyond teaching traditional library tools and searches and teaching more complex skills, such as synthesizing and integrating information. Table 10 includes a summary of the session content.

Catalog	310
Databases	299
Free Web	115
Other (e.g. concept mapping)	117

Table 10: Content of sessions

Librarians also used different teaching methods throughout the year. Hands-on or active learning includes teaching activities that get students engaged in doing, such as teaching their peers how to search a database, hands-on search practice with a common topic, or group discussions. Demonstrations or lectures are more passive presentations of material, with the librarian doing most of the talking. We also conducted tours, which included some lecture and some hands-on methods. Other instructional approaches included one-on-one practice time with assistance from a librarian. As Figure 6 suggests, hands-on or active learning was the dominant mode of instruction, although this could represent the use of these methods in the standard English 1010 curriculum.

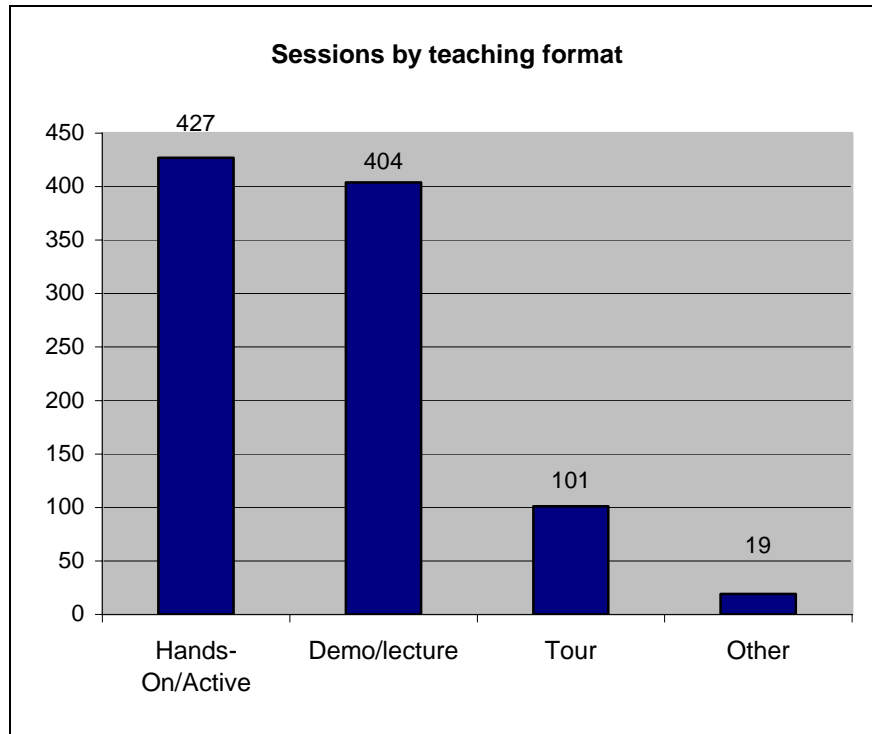


Figure 6

C. Librarians

Thirteen librarians from the Reference and Government Documents departments taught the bulk of the classes (667, which includes team-taught sessions). These librarians taught an average of 51 courses during the year, with a high of 114 by Britt Fagerheim. 105 sessions were taught or co-taught by members of the library administration, technical services departments, and Special Collections.

XI. Goals for 2005-2006

- Develop and implement a formal assessment plan. The plan will identify various assessment methods, a schedule for assessing a fixed sample of classes, and reporting mechanisms so that assessment results will be used for planning and professional development.
- Revise the English 1010 and 2010 curriculum, with a special emphasis on developing a more standardized or focused curriculum for English 2010. This will include strategies for outreach with the English 2010 instructors about the benefits of a more standard and sequenced curriculum, possibly based around problem-based learning.
- Conduct outreach to under-represented departments. This will include identifying classes in each department that would benefit from information literacy instruction.

- Outreach to graduate students. Work with the Dean of Graduate Studies and graduate program administrators in the colleges to develop more programs to meet the needs of graduate students.
- Develop mini-workshops to be conducted “on the fly” in the Information Commons. These will focus on point-of-need skills such as citing sources, searching the catalog, or locating an article.
- Expand co-curricular activities with Housing and Residence Life, Multicultural Student Services, ASUSU, and Academic Support Services, especially those geared toward first-year students.
- Develop more active learning exercises and professional development for librarians to help them implement new teaching methods in the classroom.

Appendix A: Comprehensive Session Evaluation Questions

1. What parts of the library sessions were most helpful to you?
2. What additional instruction would have helped you with your research?
3. Please describe (briefly) your research experience for this class. What sources did you use?
4. What problems did you encounter AFTER the library session?
5. Did you consult a librarian for help at any point AFTER the session?
6. Can you make any suggestions for the improvement of future library research classes?
7. Did you learn anything new in the library sessions?
8. If Yes, what did you learn that was new?

Appendix B: Faculty Feedback Survey Questions

1. Did the quality of the students' library-related work products meet your expectations?
(Please comment)
2. Did the students appear to feel more confident doing research? (Please comment)
3. Please comment on whether or not the library instruction session(s) had an impact on the quality of your students' research assignment. Examples of impact might include:
 - Evidence of improved critical thinking skills in information selection and use
 - Improved quality and relevance of materials cited
 - Sources cited correctly
4. Please provide any additional comments on student performance as related to library instruction: